

SCOTT COUNTY KICKER

Vol. XIV

BENTON, MO., FEBRUARY 20, 1915.

No. 4.

Scott County is "Busted."

But We've Got a "Fine" Court House.--County Court Meets and Soon Quits.--No Money to Pay Claims.

County court met in adjourned term Thursday of last week, but didn't remain in session long. It was no use. What can a county court do without funds? And the county treasury is empty.

Last week I gave the situation as an empty treasury and ninety thousand dollars in the hole. Since then I have made some inquiry and find that it is even worse. In addition to the amounts stated in the last issue, I learned from Treasurer Drury that we owe the Sikeston and Oran special road districts their proportion of the road tax collected this winter. We have spent THAT.

It seems that the road department has been working over-time. A very similar condition existed in 1912-13 and 1913-14, but not quite so bad, and it was covered up by "the party" bank carrying the load at 6 per cent. Warrants were paid regularly and nobody not on the inside caught on. But last summer the bank was not in a position to finance the warrants and they were turned down. Then the Kicker got hold of it and told the people.

When first exposed the Democrats tried to charge the bankrupt condition of the county to the two Republican judges on the bench. But the people knew better. They knew that all of the expenditures had been either contracted for or planned when there was not a Republican in office. When that yarn wouldn't go down, then other banks came to the rescue and tried to save "the party" at the November election. Consequently warrants were cashed until after the election, but no longer.

Up to January 20 there were about \$35,000 of outstanding warrants drawing 6 per cent. On that date the collector turned in his winter's collections and payment of these warrants began. But the allowances of the February term of court cleaned up the money on hand and left many warrants unredeemed. In addition to these outstanding warrants, and practically nothing to run the affairs of the county on during the present year, we owe about \$15,000 on the court house water and light plants.

Nor does it end here. This unsightly pile of cement, brick and mortar, for which we had use for but a third, is a costly thing to keep up. In the old court house a couple of car loads of coal in the fall was all that was needed. Now we use a car-load a month in summer and more in winter. Besides, it requires an engineer at \$60 per month and a janitor at \$50 per month the year around, and an assistant janitor during sessions of circuit court.

Where are we going to head in? Or how? The only revenue we can hope for is, perhaps, a thousand or two dollars from back taxes, seven or eight thousand dollars from the saloons, and the poll tax. That will hardly keep up the bridges.

I understand that an auditing of drainage matters would bring several thousand dollars to the general revenue fund. From the brief investigation made, it seems that the county has been paying the preliminary expense of organizing districts, and that this expense was not paid back.

I can see a few leaks that might be corked up. It will be noticed below, that M. S. Murray, a good Democrat, cost over \$2,400 as highway engineer and trimmer for a year. If we have no road money what use have we for a highway engineer?

The Kicker was the original promoter of a farm adviser for Scott county. But since we have one, I am convinced that it is money thrown away. A capable farm adviser may be all right in a community of home owners, but of what use can he be to a population of migratory farmers--tenants? He may be of some service to the landlords of Sikeston, where he is located, but so far as I have been able to learn, the home-owning farmers of the hills don't care anything about him.

Only for the pumping of water, the engineer could be dispensed with from April to October and save the coal that is used in generating electricity for lights. The days are longer in summer, and the lights are chiefly used for card playing in the evening.

The janitor could be dispensed with altogether. Let the officers furnish their own flunkies. They are paid enough. Before we got so aristocratic we had no janitor. Every fellow cleaned up his own mess and the sheriff saw to it that the court room was kept clean during sessions of court.

There are many leaks that could be corked up--and unless there is some pretty stiff corking done I see no way out. The Kicker has always contended that the county had no right to furnish, at the expense of taxpayers, a residence for the sheriff or any other official. But we have the residence, and it should be made to pay interest on the investment.

Then the board of equalization might increase the assessments of

all those who boosted for the bond issue--including Judges Fraser, Bowman and Thomas. The Democrats, who were going to build a court house without it costing anybody anything, ran out of funds the first year and "kited" money from one fund to another in order to get the bare walls up, so that when the two Republican judges went in two years ago, they found a busted treasury. So they favored a bond issue in order to finish the court house started by the Democrats.

The high-handed methods by which this county has been bankrupted is, perhaps, without precedent in a rural community. For years there had been more or less agitation for a county seat removal. They who controlled things here wanted this stopped.

Four years ago, when Judges Fraser, Bandy and Meyers took their seats on the county court bench, the winter's collections and a small surplus for county use was on hand--some \$30,000 to \$70,000. Up to that time there was collected from the people about \$9,000 annually more than was necessary to run the county. This surplus was used up somehow, either wholly or in part. They had dug a well built a sheriff's residence, built walks and gravelled the streets around court square, and so on, and still there was a surplus. It never occurred to them to reduce taxes.

When Fraser, Meyers and Bandy came on the bench they were evidently made to believe that at least \$50,000 of the money on hand was surplus. They did not seem to understand that this money was expected to run the county until next tax-paying time. And they were heavily bombarded by the local patriots with hot air.

These patriots were not concerned about what the people might think about it. What they wanted was an expensive court house that would stop further agitation and nail down the county seat. Accordingly a court house to cost \$97,000 was planned and \$50,000 set aside to build it.

In the mean time W. H. Hutton, of Commerce, discovered that the foreign insurance fund that had been allowed to accumulate to about \$17,000 was a part of the money set aside to build the court house. This money belonged to the various municipalities, and when the court had to dig it up the court house fund was considerably diminished, and the thing died down until the following year, when they went at it rough shod.

In May, 1912, work began. It is evident that the court foresaw that they could not complete the work, but relied on the people supporting a bond issue after so much money had been sunk. Hence they only contracted for the walls and roof on which they were to pay 80 per cent as the work progressed.

However, soon after the basement was finished, the court found it necessary to shift from one fund to another in order to make ends meet, and by the time the walls were up and the roof was on, not only the money on hand at the beginning, but the collections for the winter of 1912-13 had been about consumed.

They could go no further. In the fall of 1912 Judges Bowman and Thomas were elected to succeed Judges Meyers and Bandy. Fraser, the presiding judge, was in for four years and held over. The walls of the court house were up--and no money with which to proceed.

Then the bond issue was sprung. The patriots bombarded the new county court with more hot air. The two new judges expressed themselves as favoring the completion of the court house since it had been started. Petitions were circulated asking the court to order an election to submit a \$40,000 bond issue, and because of an all day rain that kept the farmers at home, it carried.

But the amount voted was hardly half enough to finish and furnish the monster barn. It took the \$40,000 from the bonds and all of the other money that came in--and still there wasn't enough. Today we are not only flat broke, but heavily in debt.

An item not mentioned above is that we now have three terms of circuit court annually instead of two, and that jurors now receive three dollars per day instead of two. This increases the expense over former years to that extent, and presses hard on an empty treasury.

Then the constantly increasing cost of the care of paupers, and the ever increasing amounts paid for the care of our insane, is a fright.

The foregoing is not the result of an "official" investigation, but I am giving you the advantage of the best information I have been able to obtain. On the whole I believe it to be very close to the actual situation.

Democrats are great on "re-

trenchment and reform"--in their platforms. And their catch-phrase during recent campaigns has been "Shall the People Rule?" Look at Washington! Since they came into power they have had the benefit of an income tax. Finding that this would not take care of the hungry horde of job-seekers they put on a war tax in time of peace. And yet we are told that the nation is on the verge of bankruptcy.

Look at Jefferson City! For months the court house organs of the various counties were filled with Jeff. City press bureau dope about the increase in receipts under Democratic rule--just as if the more the people are held up, the happier they should be. But State Treasurer Deal's report to the legislature showed that the expenditures had correspondingly increased, and an investigation is now going on to find out the reason why? It is safe to say that Treasurer Deal will never again be nominated for office by the state machine. A Democrat who doesn't know any better than to let the people know what becomes of their money won't do.

Look at Scott, Pemiscot, Stoddard, Dunklin and all of the counties where the power of so-called Democrats is absolute, and you will find that little care is exercised as to the way the people's money is blown in. Relatives, friends, political heelers and "the party" organs must be taken care of.

Before adjournment the court transacted the following business: Warrants of \$1,000 drawn on Oct. 19 for use on Benton and Kelso road ordered withdrawn and cancelled. No funds. Bonds of Joe Morris, Chas. Oliver, C. M. Murray, Carter Foster, Wm. F. Bradley, J. W. Moore and R. M. Finley, road overseers, approved.

Allowances--C. D. M. Gupton, Morley, pauper coffin, \$12; J. B. Abington, Sikeston, pauper coffin and shroud, \$14; Frank Ferrell, Oran, pauper with six children, for temporary relief, \$10; Farmers Supply Co., Sikeston, supplies, \$28.50.

M. S. Murray, highway engineer files report of having received \$2,492.26 for self and deputies from February, 1913 to December 28, 1914. Approved.

Road petitioned by Peter Bollinger and others, continued to March 2.

Petition for appointment of Axel Kjer for justice of the peace of Kelso township dismissed.

Order to send Raymond Roberts to Marshall changed to Farmington insane asylum.

Jake Sites, G. B. Greer and Chas. Tanner appointed commissioners of Sikeston special road district, and Mike Bollinger, Joe Brady and Frank Bice for Oran special road district.

Court adjourned to first Monday in March.

HOW ABOUT THIS? Jefferson City, Mo. Feb. 12--The House Investigating Committee, appointed to ascertain why expenditures have piled up so rapidly during the years 1913 and 1914, as indicated by Treasurer Deal's report, employed the accountancy firm of Marwick, Mitchell, Peat & Co. of St. Louis and Kansas City today to audit the books of the offices of the secretary of state, auditor, treasurer, penitentiary and other departments.--Press dispatch.

Well, by gum! When the county contracted for an audit of the books for ten years by St. Louis auditors, we were told that such action was against the law--that the state had auditors of its own and that these, and these only, could be used.

In other words, the Big Machine at Jefferson City was the only legal power that could look into the workings of a Little Machine of a county. And the result was that we had a two-year audit that cost over fifteen hundred dollars and didn't amount to a fig.

Now comes the legislature and wants to know something about what goes with the money at Jefferson City, and goes to St. Louis and Kansas City for its auditors.

But the law works different on different occasions. The Democratic majority in the legislature is very narrow, and high-handed methods are dangerous.

HOW HE GOT A JOB. Dallas, Tex., Feb. 13--"I was sick, hungry and out of a job. I stole a United States mail sack because I wanted to be taken to the federal penitentiary, where I know I will be fed, sheltered and given proper medical attention. I did not want to steal. I merely sought comparative comfort."

This is what Benjamin Francis, 45, told federal officials here. He was brought here from St. Angelo, Texas. Francis has asked the court to give him a quick sentence.

Don't forget to renew your Kicker for 1915. You can't afford to be without it. It tells you what other papers must suppress.

ON THE JOB.

Just after I had mailed the Kicker for last week a very well-dressed and well-fed man stood at the door of the Kicker office and seemed to be hesitating about coming in. I went to the door and invited him in. With a friendly smile he accepted the invitation, came in and was seated.

Such distinguished looking gentlemen do not appear around the Kicker office often, and I opened the conversation by inquiring his business. He said he was a division road master of the railroads and that he and two others were here to secure signatures to a petition to the legislature to increase freight and passenger rates so that prosperity might return to the country.

Then he went on to tell me all about conditions and how the prosperity of the country, and especially the work people, depended on the prosperity of the railroads; that the thing to do was to make the railroads prosperous and all would be well.

After listening to a string of his dope, which was about the same as appears in the capitalist daily press, I ventured: "You have got the wrong sow by the ear. The trouble with the country today is that all legislation has been in the interest of the railroads, the bankers and allied interests, and nobody has legislated for the farmer and laborer. The result is that you have killed the goose that lays the golden egg."

He couldn't see it that way. He went on to tell how the railroads would give employment to labor if they were permitted to charge more. Then he went on to tell me how the 2-cent rate was brought about by prejudicing the farmer, who didn't ride a hundred miles in a year, against the railroads.

"Hold on, there," I butted in. "You speak of the farmer who doesn't ride a hundred miles in a year. Do you know that he loses the bill of those who do ride?"

"How so?"

"Take, for instance the merchant. He adds the cost of transportation to the selling price of his wares."

"Then in freight rates the farmer again pays it. If he sells here he is paid the Saint Louis price less the cost of transportation and commission. For instance, if wheat is 98 cents in St. Louis, the price paid by local buyers here is about 88 cents. The difference is the cost of marketing and a profit for the dealer and it is taken in advance from the producer."

The man left without saying me to sign his petition.

Only last fall, by the usual methods, the railroad managers defeated the railroad employees' Full Crew law. Thousands upon thousands of dollars were spent to defeat this just demand of the railroad boys.

Yet, today, the railroad boys are helping the managers kill the lower rates that it took the people twenty years to secure. But what else can they do? When the boss comes around with his petition and says "sign," he means it. But it's a "free" country.

NOTICE TO TEACHERS. The examination for certificates to teach in the public schools of Scott county will be held in the court house at Benton, Mo., Friday and Saturday, March 5 and 6, 1915, beginning at 8 o'clock each morning.

The order of subjects have not been received yet, but presume they will be same as before. Be here early each morning.

All first grade papers are sent to the state superintendent for grading, and others on request. Those desiring to make first or second grade certificates should consult the Law on high school requirements or write the county superintendent. Remember the date--Thanking one and all.

Chas. Harris Co. Supt.

A GOOD SOLDIER. By Jack London.

Young man the lowest a'm in your life is to be a good soldier. The good soldier never tries to distinguish right from wrong. He only obeys. If he is ordered to fire on his fellow citizen, on his friends, on his neighbors, on his relatives, he obeys without hesitation. If he is ordered to fire down a crowded street when the poor are clamoring for bread, he obeys, and sees the gray hairs of age stained with red and the life-time gushing from the breast of women, feeling neither remorse nor sympathy. If he is ordered off as one of a firing squad to execute a hero or benefactor, he fires without hesitation, though he knows the bullet will pierce the noblest heart that ever beat in human breast.

A good soldier is a blind, heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is not a man. He is not even a brute, for brutes only kill in self-defense. All that is human in him, all that is divine in him, all that constitutes the man, has been sworn away when he took the enlistment roll. His mind, conscience, eye, his very soul, are in keeping of his officer.

No man can fall lower than a soldier--it is a depth beneath which we cannot go.

AN OLD-TIME EDITORIAL. "If the law fails to protect the weak from the strong then Anarchy ensues. If justice is not impartially administered, the people will not be able to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, and if they fail to make such distinction, there can be no stable government."

The foregoing is not our editorial expression. It was got off by Confucius 500 years before Christ. Governments have been proving, for nearly 2500 years that Confucius knew what he was talking about.--Memphis Socialist.

Tommy Clapp and Lester Moody, the two boys who murdered and robbed the Brown brothers near Thebes last December, were given life sentences at Cairo last week.

There is something radically at fault with the character that can be permanently injured by truth.

COURTS MENACE TO LIBERTY.

From the Railway Federationist. The decision of the United States Supreme Court declaring unconstitutional the so-called Kansas coercion statute undoubtedly will have a far-reaching effect upon the future activities of the trades union movement of this country. The Supreme Court's decision in the Coppage case nullifies similar acts in thirteen states and Porto Rico. Thus the efforts of organized labor to get these laws adopted by the several states have been nullified by that branch of the government whose only function, it appears, is to override the will of the people as expressed through their representatives in the legislative branches of government.

It is such decisions as these that must eventually lead the common people to the conclusion that the judicial branch of our government will either have to be radically changed or abolished altogether. The opinion is fast gaining ground that the courts of this country have become the bulwark of vested interests and predatory wealth, and that instead of conserving the liberties of the people, they have become a real menace.

Why should four men be endowed with the power to overrule the will of the people in thirteen states? Wherein is the difference whether the autocratic power is vested in a single person called a king, or whether that power be vested in a bunch of black-robed individuals styled the supreme court? The highest authority should be vested in the people and they alone should constitute the court of last resort.

NEED COPPER FOR SHELLS. Rome, February 14.--Dispatches from Vienna says the Austrian Government has taken a census of the church bells throughout the empire, with the object of requisitioning them eventually for the purpose of extracting the copper for military purposes.

The consent of the ecclesiastical authorities has already been obtained conditionally. The churches are not to be entirely deprived of bells, the traditional and historical bells being spared. In the meantime the government is buying up all the available copper. The bells will be taken over as a last resort.

AMONG "PEACE" OFFICERS. Panama, Feb. 15.--A fight between soldiers and native policemen has resulted, according to first reports of the conflict, in the death of five policemen and three soldiers and the wounding of many of the combatants.

A carnival is in progress, and many soldiers were on leave to attend the festivities. The fight started in the tenderloin district.

READ THIS TO PAPA. A little girl wrote this composition on men:

"Men are what women marry. They drink, and smoke, and swear but don't go to church. Perhaps if they wore bonnets they would. They are more logical than women and also more zoological. Both men and women sprung from monkeys, but the women sprung further than the men."

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IN THE SOUTHEAST.

What the People are Doing in Other Counties that are Near.

Hayti Critic.--W. O. Morgan, a merchant at Conran, accidentally killed himself last Friday. He and a party of friends were camping on Little River, and they had separated two and two. Mr. Morgan and Jim Stephens going in a boat together, Mr. Stephens depending entirely upon Mr. Morgan to guide in the overflow. When a mile and a half from camp, they selected a donkey on which to shoot from, and after putting out their decoys, they returned to the donkey. Just as Mr. Morgan got out of the boat his gun was fired, the load of powder entering his throat under the chin and coming out at the base of his skull. He fell dead, not a muscle in his body even quivering. Mr. Stephens being a stranger to the overflow, and being with a dead man, was left in a predicament which few people can appreciate, but he lifted the corpse into the boat and started in the direction he imagined the camp to be, and after several hours pushing, shouting and shooting, he managed to get in camp.

Caruthersville Democrat.--The Mississippi river is still showing a rise here of about 3 inches every 24 hours, and the crest of the rise will not reach here before the middle of next week, there being about two feet more water in sight unless there should be more rain. This will put the river about two feet above flood stage, according to reports from the Cairo weather bureau, which report governs this section. Many people on the Tennessee side are getting their stock out of the low lands, and those who are taking the risk of leaving them there have them on mounds on their farms above the water, and with only two more feet in sight, most of them can handle them this way. However, during the high waters of 1912 and 1913, nearly every mound throughout that section was covered also, the farmers never having dreamed of the water reaching these heights.

Marble Hill Press.--M. G. Slinkard was here Monday and gave us the following fish story, which is quite different from the ordinary fish tale. He says that during a rain storm a short time ago, Joe H. Whitener and family heard something fall on the house slide into the gutter and wiggle its way through the plating to the ground. The noise it made caused considerable excitement in the home and they ran outside to see what had made the unusual disturbance and just under the pipe they found a live fish--a sucker--about nine inches in length.

Mr. Whitener is perfectly reliable and if you think Mr. Slinkard or The Press is faking you, just see, write or phone Mr. Whitener. Mr. Slinkard says he saw the fish. Now how the fish got there is the perplexing question.

Fredericktown News.--Mrs. P. E. Genoway gave a most delightful entertainment in honor of her husband, P. E. Genoway, at her elegant home on Highland Park last Monday evening. It was the occasion of Mr. Genoway's birthday. The honored guests were the members of the official board of the Methodist church. A dainty and delicious three-course luncheon was served and those who partook of this repast can certainly testify to Mrs. Genoway's accomplishment in this line.

Jackson Items.--The necessary papers were obtained from the county clerk this morning to admit Mrs. Wm. Steinhoff of Dutchtown to the state hospital. The unfortunate woman became suddenly and violently insane. Her husband is a clerk in the Eggmann store at Chaffee. The case is a particularly sad one, as a baby was born to the Steinhoffs only about two weeks ago, and another is about two-years-old. The patient will be taken away at once.

Jackson Items.--Express Agent Al Hunsicker obligingly furnished us the following statement of the following quantities of food articles shipped out of Jackson during the past year by express alone: 22,716 pounds of bread, 23,447 pounds of butter, 2,170 cases of eggs, 105,280 pounds of dressed poultry, 34,434 pounds of live poultry, 7,262 pounds of meat, 100 calves and 25 hogs, the latter being fine stock shipped out.

Jackson Cashbook.--Frank Allen, a resident of Oak Ridge, was found dead in his stable last Saturday morning. He had been currying his horses, and is supposed to have died with heart disease, from which he had been a sufferer for some time. Mr. Allen was about 50 years of age and leaves a wife and six children. He was a hard-working man, and a good citizen whose many friends regret his sudden death.

Cape Girardeau Tribune.--The Steamer St. James has announced her entry into the freight and passenger business in opposition to the Lee line between St. Louis and Memphis. The St. James will have St. Louis for Memphis on her maiden trip Tuesday.

Read the unmuzzled Kicker.

In some of the "rock-ribbed" Democratic counties the officials are beginning to take some notice of the law on public printing. In quite all of these counties the officials own or control an organ to which is shoveled legal printing at three times what it ought to cost. Down in Mississippi county the Charleston Enterprise has been the favored organ. The paper is owned by Paul B. Moore, a politician of state reputation, and one of the editors is John F. Martin, probate judge. The Charleston Courier says: The present County Court gave it out a lot of work that the county printing this time would set to the lowest and best bidder. Accordingly the Mississippi county Publishers sharpened up their pencils and went after it. When Judges Vaughn, Preston and Langsdale called for bids there were four responses: the Enterprise, East Prairie Eagle, Republican and Courier. The bids were opened promptly and the Couriers bid found to be about 35 per cent lower than the next competitor, so the contract was immediately awarded to this paper. Our bid was a low one--we knew it was a low one--but our experience in going after something that has been nailed down to a certain place for some time has taught us to use a crowbar instead of a toothpick to pry things loose.

Caruthersville Democrat.--The famous gunboat Essex, which played such a prominent part in the Mississippi river during the Civil War, has been dug up from the mud of the river bed where it had lain for nearly half a century.

When the war closed the Essex was taken to Mound City, and consigned to the "bone-yard" there. In course of time she sank, and the sands washed over her, burying her completely.

A short time ago the current of the river changed slightly and brought the wreck of the historic vessel to view. Several persons have secured planks from the old ship for souvenirs. The white oak is stained by its fifty years' burial and it is still gray in color, but as sound as a dollar. The iron from the vessels is also perfectly preserved, and even the oakum taken from the seams in the hull still has its substance unchanged.

Cape Girardeau Republican.--Trainmen coming in on the Gulf train Friday reported that an alleged kidnapper and a 13-year-old girl were arrested on that train by the sheriff of Dunklin county and taken off at Malden, where they were held awaiting developments. The trainmen reported that the man, who appeared to be about middle aged, and the girl boarded the train at Gibson and held tickets for Commerce. Shortly after boarding the train the girl began crying and when asked by several ladies what she was crying about, she told them that the man was kidnapping her and intended to take her into Illinois. The sheriff of Dunklin county happened to be on the train, and when he heard the girl's story he placed both under arrest.

Jackson Items.--When Pin Luckey, a barber in Hoffmeister shop, arose yesterday morning he discovered the door of his smoke house open and a quick investigation showed that during the night a bold thief had pulled out the staple which held the lock stolen nine hams, weighing from fourteen to sixteen pounds each, one shoulder and a can of lard containing about three gallons. No noise was heard during the night.

Jackson Items.--The Lutheran congregation at Uniontown in Perry County celebrated its diamond jubilee last Sunday, having been organized in 1840. The present pastor, Rev. O. R. Hueschen, was for a number of years pastor of the Hanover church in Randall township. Out of the Uniontown congregation nine young men have become ministers, while six became Lutheran teachers.

Pemiscot Argus.--The association of the tomato growers here is getting along nicely. The seed have all been planted and the plants are coming up. It is said there will probably be twelve or fifteen acres planted hereabouts this year and, with anything like a favorable season, the profits should be quite good.

Ben Morgan, son of the city marshal of Libbourn, was shot and dangerously wounded near Parma by two highwaymen after being robbed of \$1, all the money the robbers could find on him.

"CIVILIZATION." Denver, Col., Feb. 13.--St. Louis, Louis, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Dallas and Kansas City are gypsy girls and white girls the latter stolen, are sold for sums ranging from \$20 to \$2500. This is the statement made by Wm. F. Fitch, special investigator for the Department of Justice, in an official report sent to Washington last week.